

FROM THE EDITOR

Ethos

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What do you stand for? That is broad question that encompasses many thoughts and identities. It stems from notions such as who we are, who we chose to be, and what we value. While these can shift a bit as we learn, grow, and develop, it tends to be our center and our guide. From time to time, we encounter challenges to our stand or what we believe. Sometimes those challenges are foreseen, but often they are not. Our response to those challenges are influenced by many factors. I suggest that the greatest of these, however, is preparation. This involves choosing ahead of time how we will show up into a situation. While the circumstances, people, and challenges may be novel to the situation, we are not. What I mean by that is we choose how we show up into each and every situation. We control our emotions, actions, beliefs, and preparation. Depending on where you are at on your own developmental journey that can be great news as it implies control and focus. We are in control of our actions and even our reactions. If we look at every leadership situation, it at least consists of the leader, the follower, and the situation. Even in situations where we have no perceived control over the circumstances, and even though we may have not been able to influence those who are on the team, we still control 33% of the leadership dynamic directly—ourselves. That means that the worst influence we have on a situation, even complex ones, is 33%. That's great news when dealing with the volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous situations of today. The even better news is that, generally, we will have some influence over the situation (at least an understanding of the dynamics) and over the individuals/teams that we lead. The point here is that no matter the situation we find ourselves in as a leader, we fully own ourselves, how we show up, and our subsequent reactions.

Effective leader developers know that this is important. It is the constant with which we have to work. When executive coaches work with leaders, the frame of reference that they use is the individual. When teachers work with students, effective teachers start with where the student is at. This individual focus is important because it

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is the most important point of leverage for individual development. The starting point is who we are. Who are we as a person? This is often referred to as ethos. Put simply, ethos (Merriam-Webster, n.d.) is our distinguishing character, our moral nature, the guiding beliefs we have as a person. It isn't the skills that we have; it is the person that we are. If someone asked you about your ethos, what would come to mind? How would you describe yourself? What are those guiding beliefs? What do you stand for? Who are you? While those may seem like philosophical questions, they are really quite pragmatic and are at the heart of individual development. The reason is because that is our frame, or lens, by which we view everything. It is our connection point to one another in terms of what we value and find important. We must know this if we are to develop ourselves and develop as leaders. For those that have not considered this before, I would like to challenge you to contemplate ethos. It's not just the old idea of who you are when no one is looking. It is who you are, period. Who you choose to show up as. Who are you across situations? Does your center or values change from situation to situation? Are you fully present? Once you can answer those questions, then you are in a great place to consider meaningful development. For those that have already thoughtfully considered who you are, then you are in a great place regarding your development. This is our starting point. Our baseline or foundation, if you will. It is important to have this solid understanding as all other efforts are layered upon this. From here, the fun really begins.

Some leaders are challenged by this. They have never really taken the time to consider these questions. This is why we often have leaders that drift or even derail. It's not that they necessarily lose their center, it may be that they never really had to confront it before. They were able to get by on their skills and expertise. It was enough

to get them through and even succeed. However, for all individuals, and especially leaders, we come to a point where these things must be considered. We all get challenged, pushed, and stretched at some point. If we don't know who we are and what we stand for, our ethos if you will, then we are on a shaky foundation and are likely to be influenced by the situation or events. This lack of understanding and consideration can cede control to the situation. That is why preparation is so important. We need to understand what we can so that we can limit the chaos. If we cede this control, then we could see some predictable results that are likely contrary to what the individual, and the organization, desire.

Our development as leaders, with our ethos in mind, must be based on certain fundamental intentions to ensure purposeful development and growth (preparation). The first of these is that the developmental process must be intentional. In order for development to occur, in the manner in which it is needed, it must be intentionally applied. Development can occur even when it is not intentional, but it will be reactionary and not directly targeted where we want the development to occur. Back to the earlier statement, we are in control of ourselves and how we show up to the situation. That also includes our development. We need to ask ourselves, am I showing up ready to learn? Do I understand what is about to happen? Have I done the necessary preparatory work to ensure the developmental experience is effective? Am I willing to commit to the developmental process? These are questions that we should be able to answer heading into any developmental experience. It helps to ensure that we can maximize the benefit to be gained. Failure to understand this context, can lead to a misalignment between intent and learning leading to suboptimal performance and development.

Another intention to consider is that the developmental experience needs to be integrated. Integration applies to several dynamics. First, it should be integrated along with other developmental experiences. If you want to maximize the developmental process, all processes should align to not only support the developmental experience, they must also be aligned with other developmental or training events that are occurring. This allows for a synergy between events and the greatest possibility of maximizing the development for the individual. In addition, the experiences need to be integrated into what the individual will actually be doing. One of the areas where developmental experiences often fall short is that they are treated as distinct events and occur separate from the actual experiences the individual faces on a daily basis. This is often seen when an individual goes to a different location for the experience and then returns (often unsupported) into their work environment. Short of structures and systems to support the individual, it is likely that they will regress to the behaviors that they had prior to the developmental experience. One way that this has been mitigated is through coaching so that the individual has someone to help process their growth, development, and future goal setting. In either case, intentionality in developmental experiences is vital.

A third intention is that in order to maximize the development, it needs to be targeted to the individual. While one size fits all approaches seem practical when dealing with large amounts of individuals, the reality is that the experience is often wasted when the individual going through the experience is not considered. The good news is that even small tailoring to the experience can have a large impact on the individual as they go through the developmental experience.

The final intention to consider with developmental experiences is that they need to be investigated. We need assessment to ensure that the intended outcomes are achieved. While the individual may have enjoyed the experience, we need evidence to make sure that it “moved the needle” in their development in the areas needed. With large amounts of money and time being spent on developmental experiences, we need to make sure that we understand the return on investment on the development. While not every experience will have a tangible and measureable outcome, we ought to at least be able to understand the impact that is happening on the individual, team, and organizational levels.

From a developmental perspective, if we understand how we are showing up, and we can approach developmental experiences with the right approach (intentional, integrated, individualized, and investigated) we are in the greatest position to maximize the developmental experience and see actual development occur and be sustained over time allowing the individual the ability to understand how they are showing up in their leadership.

In This Issue

This issue of the Journal of Character & Leadership Development (JCLD) continues our annual linkage with the National Character & Leadership Symposium (NCLS) that is held every February at the United States Air Force Academy. NCLS is a multi-day, intentional focus on character and leadership. It brings together a wide range of local, national, and international leaders around a particular theme. The theme lines up with one of USAFA’s organizational outcomes. This year’s theme is warrior ethos¹. In order to support that endeavor, we have intentionally aligned the JCLD with NCLS so that the Journal can serve as a read ahead

1 <https://www.usafa.edu/app/uploads/Warrior-Ethos-White-Paper-approved.pdf>

on the theme of NCLS to give attendees a chance to starting thinking about and processing the theme. We find this to be an intentional and important step in leader development.

The first article is by Dr. Justin Stoddard and colleagues who serve on the Warrior Ethos Outcome Team for USAFA. In their article, they examine what USAFA means by warrior ethos and how it relates to the profession of arms. They also describe the four main attributes of the outcome: 1) analyze and value the profession of arms, 2) demonstrate integrity as related to moral courage, 3) demonstrate service before self as related to moral courage, and 4) demonstrate excellence in all we do as related to discipline. They conclude this deep dive on the warrior ethos by describing how USAFA integrates these attributes throughout the 47-month curriculum.

This first article sets the foundation to what USAFA means by warrior ethos. Following this, the rest of the articles focus on different aspects of the four attributes, in addition to the proficiencies that fall under them. The authors, and the organizations that they represent, show the scope and diversity of thought on this topic. While impossible to do a complete examination of warrior ethos, the included articles can help set the stage and to expand one's thinking of this important topic.

We begin with a brief conversation with Senator Tammy Duckworth (D-IL) and her thoughts on warrior ethos. She shares her perspective on her own leader development, advice for young leaders, and the importance of service. She has an extensive background in the military and public service and uses this to serve her constituents. As an advocate for military service members (as well as many other important causes) she uses her platform as a U.S. Senator to inspire change.

The next article is by CMD Andrew Ledford (USN) and Dr. Celeste Raver Luning of the United States Naval Academy. They start by discussing how the SEAL Ethos was created. They outline the events that precipitated the development of the ethos, the process used, and its important attributes. Following this, they discuss how the U.S. Naval Academy approaches the development of warrior ethos through various aspects of the curriculum.

The issue continues with a challenging article by Dr. Kevin Basik (USAFA 1993) where he brings up the idea of the courage myth. In the article, he walks the reader through several examples examining the construct of courage. Through this process, he discusses the gap between deciding and doing and several ways to address this gap. By understanding the gap, and the pressures that precede it, we are in a better position to move past the gap and embrace three catalysts for courage—competence, confidence, and commitment. He finishes the article by talking about the leader's role in creating a courageous culture.

Next, we have Colonel Todd Woodruff (USA), Dr. Russ Lemler of the U.S. Military Academy, and Dr. Ryan Brown of the Doerr Institute for New Leaders at Rice University presenting a project they have been working on related to coaching in a leader development intensive environment. They describe a study analyzing the efficacy of coaching and how it fits into the West Point Leader Growth Model. Results showed numerous benefits of coaching above and beyond the traditional developmental approaches of mentorship and reflection. Based on the results, they recommend an expanded leadership model. They finish up the article by linking coaching to a warrior ethos.

Lt Col Daniel Bolin (USAF; USAFA 2005) Air University Liaison to USAFA and Mark Verstegen

of EXOS, continue the conversation of warrior ethos. Through their dialogue, Mark discusses his journey and how he utilizes his framework to encourage and improve performance. He describes how the four elements of mindset, nutrition, movement, and recovery can be utilized to develop sustainable high performance regardless of domain. He shares his experiences and ties in leadership and its critical role to performance.

The next article is framed around how athletics plays an important role in the development of the warrior ethos. Through examining his own journey, Lt Col Daniel Bolin (USAF; USAFA 2005), describes the impact that athletics has had on his personal and professional development through sharing several critical events in his life. He wraps up the article by sharing several perspectives from a world-class athlete, a former NFL player, a division one wrestling coach, and a former military commander. He weaves these perspectives into a narrative of how athletics helps shape an individual's physical courage and warrior ethos.

The starting point to developing warrior ethos are the individuals that will accomplish the mission. In a conversation with Brigadier General Brook Leonard (USAF; Chief of Staff, USSPACECOM; USAFA 1992), he discusses the importance of human capital development. Through reflecting on his time in the Air Force, and his multiple times as a commander, he highlights several of the steps he took to ensure human capital development within his organizations. He also highlights his own leader development and how he continues to grow as a leader.

In continuing the conversation around the importance of human capital, Lieutenant General Chris Miller (Ret, USAF; USAFA 1980) offers an

important look at inclusion and the power of diversity. By introducing the critical aspect of inclusion, he examines the role that leaders have in fostering inclusion within their organizations. He ties in this approach to the Leader of Character Framework at USAFA that focuses on living honorably, lifting others, and elevating performance. The thought piece is an important reminder to leaders on the importance of the role they serve in taking care of their people and ensuring their development and inclusion.

In continuing our theme of Warrior Ethos, Lieutenant Colonels Robert Reimer (USAFA 1997) and Hans Larson (USAFA 1999) of USAFA, and Colonel Maximilian Bremer (USAFA 1997) of United States Northern Command suggest a rethinking of warrior ethos and how we develop leaders. Through reconceptualizing warrior ethos, they offer several leadership considerations to help leaders reimagine what is meant by warrior ethos. They finish up their article by offering practical recommendations as to how military members can lead for warrior ethos.

Col Ryan Hill (USAF; USAFA 1999) of the U.S. Naval War College examines how mental complexity can be used by leaders to help them succeed. He walks the reader through mental complexity as well as environmental complexity and how that fits into leadership by offering several types of leaders and how they can approach this complexity. Through these leadership types, he examines the subsequent communication, expectations, supervision, evaluation, and organizational outputs.

In a different approach to the concept of warrior ethos, Dr. Tony Andenoro of St. Thomas University examines how to mitigate social vulnerability and maximize sustainability. He describes the work that was done by the United States Coast Guard 7th

District with respect to the three phase process of issue identification, internal capacity building, and external partnerships. He takes this successful approach and makes connections to higher education with recommendations how it can be used to address some of the challenges faced in the COVID-19 environment.

The next article is by Major Chaveso Cook (USA) of Tufts University and colleagues take a phenomenological view of public leadership. Through description of a qualitative analysis of a program set up at Harvard University, they examine the ability to develop moral leadership and moral purpose among military fellowship participants. Through the phenomenological approach, they were able to discover themes that are significant to the understanding of public leadership.

Dr. Alan Briding (USAFA 1973), adjunct professor at the United States Air Force Academy and Air University, introduces the idea of the essential partnership which is a combination of core functions of military leadership and how they relate to the USAF Core Values. He shares his personal experiences gained while on active duty to examine some of the critical functions of military leadership. He follows this with a description of the 'grey zone' of leadership which involves making decisions when the conditions do not lead to obvious decisions. He follows this by tying in the USAF Core Values and how they align with warrior ethos.

Leaders must often rely on their perceptions. These perceptions are important because they can influence our development, achieving goals, enrich connections with others, and make more informed decisions. Lieutenant Colonel Justin Pendry (USAF; USAFA 2002) of the University of San Diego and Dr. James Dobbs of the Center for Creative Leadership discuss

research conducted at the Air Force Academy focused on cadet commitment regarding development. They found that seeing the big picture, seeing opportunities rather than just challenges, embracing a growth mindset, and focusing on the collective team rather than solely self-interest, were important parts of cadet perceptions. They finish the article by offering several applications for enhancing leadership effectiveness.

In order to get a different perspective on development, the next article is by USAFA Cadet Second Class William DiRubbio. He offers his perspective on physical training during the cadet experience. Drawing on his own personal experiences with the Cadet Wing, he discusses the importance of training, how the warrior ethos fits in training, and suggests a way forward. His insights give a different perspective as one who is subject to, as well as shaping, the training environment at USAFA.

The final article is by Dr. Jacqueline Whitt of the U.S. Army War College and Dr. Susan Steen of Air University. In their article, they discuss why cosmopolitan communication is an essential skill for military leader development. They focus on skills that leaders need to develop in order to cultivate and manage diverse perspectives in their organizations. They close the article by discussing the importance of conversations and how communication, specifically cosmopolitan communication, is a 21st Century leadership imperative.

Book Reviews

In addition to the feature articles and conversations that are in the JCLD, we want to introduce readers to other works related to character and leadership development. While there are numerous books that are published yearly on these topics, we try to highlight several works that are especially applicable to character

and leader development. In that light, we have three reviews in this Issue of the JCLD. The first is a review on a series of books by James MacGregor Burns. These books discuss the development of modern leadership theory. The second review is on the book, *Mindset: the New Psychology of Success* by Dr. Carol Dweck. The final review is on *Loonshots: How to Nurture the Crazy Ideas that Win Wars, Cure Diseases, and Transform Industries* by Safi Bahcall. While you may already have your own reading list, we encourage you to consider these.

Profile in Leadership

One effective way to understand leadership is to read about and study current and previous leaders. Through this examination, we are able to pull from their experiences to help inform our own development. To support that approach, we have a Profile in Leadership section where we are able to take a bit of a deep dive into a particular leader. For this issue, Amanda Hess of the Center for Character and Leadership Development explores the career of Brigadier General David Grant and his role in helping to establish the flight nurse occupation. Hess does an excellent and detailed job of walking the reader through historical examples and sets the stage which highlights the need for this critical occupation. She then reviews Brig Gen Grant's role in helping to set up the conditions necessary to develop the medical air evacuation capability.

Looking Ahead

The next issue of the JCLD (June 2021) will focus on the broad theme of the future of leadership. As leader and character developers, we are constantly working on developing leaders for what they need right now in their current situation. However, we are also concerned about the skills that they will need in the future. To capture some of the great work that is being done, we

will focus our June issue on that topic. Contributions could be thought pieces, empirical articles, or descriptive pieces covering best practices. The idea of the theme is to get the conversation going about what we need to be thinking about as we examine leadership in the future.

If you have an interest in submitting work on the above topics or know of someone who would be interesting to have a conversation with, please contact me at douglas.lindsay@afacademy.af.edu or jclcd@usafa.edu with your ideas.

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Reference

Merriam-Webster. (n.d.) Ethos. In *Merriam-Webster.com dictionary*. Retrieved February 1, 2021, from <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/ethos>